



## Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs



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# WWII Woman Veteran Joined Army on a Dare, Became WACs Captain

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 30, 2015)** – Helen Horlacher Evans was teaching home economics at Versailles High School when the United States joined the Allies in World War II. On a dare, she applied to the newly created Women’s Army Corps Officer Candidate School and was accepted.

As the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs highlights the military service of Kentucky women in its Year of the Woman Veteran, KDVA asked the 95-year-old Lexington resident to share her story:

“Yes, I joined the Army on a dare, a dare made with two other teachers at Versailles High School,” she writes. “We were chatting in the teachers’ lounge over this new Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (“Auxiliary” was later dropped) just created, May 1942, five months after the start of the U.S. becoming part of World War II. We learned of it through the Lexington newspapers and radio. (There was no TV or cell phones in those days.)

“We got excited, doing our share of laughter, and then came the dare – the three of us. We borrowed a car, drove over to the Federal Building in Lexington and obtained the application forms. There were only two weeks in which to return the completed form. We did.”

She was in the first group of Kentucky women accepted for the WAC and among the youngest, at just 21 years old barely meeting the minimum age for women joining the military. She served until the end of the war in the U.S. and the European Theater.

“My tasks made me part of the Office of the Quartermaster General. I taught Army food service to WACs, traveled the states making WAC mess hall inspections for the Washington, D.C., headquarters. Obtained WAC food consumption statistics for the official WAC Menu Survey -- WAC strength of 100,000 women vs. 100,000 men with greater food needs would result in yearly savings to army of \$2,099,115. (1940s value.)

“In the European Theatre of Operations I made inspections of army mess hall food service.”

After returning to civilian life, she kept in touch with her military experience, working at the regional office of the U.S. Veterans Administration in Louisville, helping veterans get benefits to complete or continue their education. She has been an active community volunteer on multiple veteran-related projects, including serving as Kentucky’s representative on the committee to establish the National Women’s Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Now in her 90s, she still works to help veterans today, serving as a Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) volunteer on the Lexington VA Medical Center Volunteer Board.

The Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) is spotlighting Kentucky’s 24,000 women veterans throughout 2015, which Governor Steve Beshear proclaimed as the Year of the Woman Veteran in Kentucky.

“Kentucky Women Veterans Unite! is the motto for the Year of the Woman Veteran because as women and as veterans they know they are stronger united,” said KDVA Commissioner Heather French Henry. “Throughout the year, we are reaching out to women veterans and to everyone in our communities to make the connections that support and celebrate our women veterans in Kentucky.”

In addition to sponsoring a statewide conference on women veterans in April, KDVA has held and will hold events and present messages tied to the specific concerns of women veterans in all aspects of their lives, including physical and mental health, education, employment and housing.

KDVA is working with state and local partners throughout Kentucky to ensure women veterans have the opportunity to participate in and take full advantage of these events.

“Kentucky’s women veterans, like all our veterans, are a huge potential asset not just to the Commonwealth as a whole, but to each community in which they live and work,” Commissioner Henry said.

“In 2015 the Year of the Woman Veteran, we are making sure that potential is neither wasted nor overlooked.”

Find more information about the Year of the Woman Veteran at [veterans.ky.gov/Pages/KY-Women-Veterans-Unite!.aspx](http://veterans.ky.gov/Pages/KY-Women-Veterans-Unite!.aspx)